

Amendments to the Claims

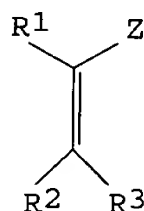
B1  
1. (Currently Amended) A thermally processed image forming material containing elsewhere on a support a reducing agent, a binder and non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains characterized in that the non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains are prepared by mixing and reacting a silver ion-containing solution, the solvent of which being water or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, with a solution of a fatty acid alkali metal salt, the solvent of which being water, an organic solvent, or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, in a closed mixing means.

2. (Canceled)

B2  
3. (Currently Amended) The thermally processed image forming material as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains are prepared by cooling a reaction mixture obtained after the reaction proceeded within the closed mixing means.

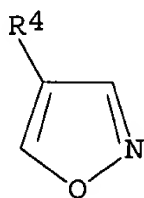
4. (Currently Amended) A thermally processed image forming material containing elsewhere on a support a reducing agent, a binder and non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains characterized in that the non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt

grains are prepared by micro-dispersing the reaction mixture at an operating pressure of 1,800 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> or above using a ultrahigh pressure dispersion apparatus, the nucleation aid being at least any one of a compound selected from the group consisting of a substituted alkene derivative expressed by the general formula (1) below, a substituted isooxazole derivative expressed by the general formula (2) below, and an acetal derivative expressed by the general formula (3) below:



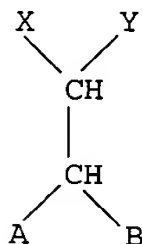
(1)

(where, R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> independently represent a hydrogen atom or substituent; Z represents an electron attracting group or silyl group; and, R<sup>1</sup> and Z, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup>, or R<sup>3</sup> and Z may individually bind with each other to form a cyclic structure),



(2)

(where, R<sup>4</sup> represents a substituent), and



(3)

(where, X and Y independently represent a hydrogen atom or substituent; A and B independently represent alkoxy group, alkylthio group, alkylamino group, aryloxy group, arylthio group, anilino group, heterocyclic oxy group, heterocyclic thio group or heterocyclic amino group; and, X and Y, or A and B may individually bind with each other to form a cyclic structure).

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5. (Previously Amended) A thermally processed image forming material containing elsewhere on a support a reducing agent, a binder and non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains characterized in that the non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains are prepared by (1) mixing and reacting a silver ion-containing solution, the solvent of which being water or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, with a solution of a fatty acid alkali metal salt, the solvent of which being water, an organic solvent, or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, in a closed

mixing means, and then (2) micro-dispersing the reaction mixture at an operating pressure of 1,800 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> or above using a ultrahigh pressure dispersion apparatus.

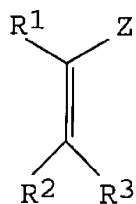
6. (Original) The thermally processed image forming material as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the micro-dispersion using the ultrahigh pressure dispersion apparatus is effected in a ultrahigh pressure jet flow.

7. (Previously Amended) The thermally processed image forming material as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a photosensitive silver halide is additionally contained.

8. (Previously Amended) The thermally processed image forming material as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the non-photosensitive fatty silver salt grains and the binder are contained in an image producing layer, and a polymer latex having a glass transition point of -30 to 40 comprises 50 wt% or more of the binder.

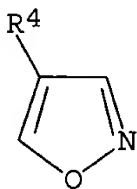
9. (Previously Amended) The thermally processed image forming material as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least a single species of nucleation aid is contained in at least one layer provided on the same side of the image producing layer on the support.

10. (Original) The thermally processed image forming material as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the nucleation aid is at least any one of a compound selected from the group consisting of a substituted alkene derivative expressed by the general formula (1) below, a substituted isooxazole derivative expressed by the general formula (2) below, and an acetal derivative expressed by the general formula (3) below:



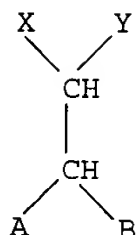
(1)

(where,  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  independently represent a hydrogen atom or substituent; Z represents an electron attracting group or silyl group; and,  $R^1$  and Z,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$ ,  $R^1$  and  $R^2$ , or  $R^3$  and Z may individually bind with each other to form a cyclic structure),



(2)

(where,  $R^4$  represents a substituent), and



(3)

(where, X and Y independently represent a hydrogen atom or substituent; A and B independently represent alkoxy group, alkylthio group, alkylamino group, aryloxy group, arylthio group, anilino group, heterocyclic oxy group, heterocyclic thio group or heterocyclic amino group; and, X and Y, or A and B may individually bind with each other to form a cyclic structure).

11. (New) Non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains prepared by mixing and reacting a silver ion-containing solution, the solvent of which being water or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, with a solution of a fatty acid alkali metal salt, the solvent of which being water, an organic solvent, or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, in a closed mixing means.

12. (New) The non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains are prepared by cooling a reaction mixture obtained after the reaction proceeded within the closed mixing means.

13. (New) The non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains are prepared by micro-dispersing a reaction mixture obtained after the reaction proceeded within the closed mixing means at an operating pressure of 1,800 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> or above using a ultrahigh pressure dispersion apparatus.

14. (New) A method of preparing non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains which comprises mixing and reacting a silver ion-containing solution, the solvent of which being water or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, with a solution of a fatty acid alkali metal salt, the solvent of which being water, an organic solvent, or a mixture of water and an organic solvent, in a closed mixing means.

15. (New) The method of preparing non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains as claimed in Claim 14, which further

comprises cooling a reaction mixture obtained after the reaction proceeded within the closed mixing means.

16. (New) The method of preparing non-photosensitive fatty acid silver salt grains as claimed in Claim 14, which further comprises micro-dispersing a reaction mixture obtained after the reaction proceeded within the closed mixing means at an operating pressure of 1,800 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> or above using a ultrahigh pressure dispersion apparatus.

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